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Bedouins MJ4

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132 nevertheless and remained very *piano* for the rest of the day. We had our lunch, which somebody had had the sense to cover before the rice and meat had been removed from the cooking-pot, but everything was nevertheless impregnated with the red dust that had come down upon us like a pall, and even the rice had taken on a pretty touch of pink. In an hour the sky was clear again, but the countryside, even to the *'arfaj* bushes, now bore a reddish covering, while the actual surface of the ground had a coating of fine dust like red snow a quarter of an inch deep. On return to Kuwait we learned that the left fringe of the storm had passed over the town and caused some alarm. Dr. Mylrea of the American Mission gave me a graphic description of the splendour of the scene as the scarlet and black cloud rolled across the bay of Kuwait towards the town. But from the very slight deposit of red dust that lay on Kuwait, it was evident that the town had only seen a mild version of the phenomenon, and that we in the south had got the full benefit of the storm; certainly we alone had seen and heard the curious and terrifying electrical discharges and thunder.

Our wheels cut tracks in the red desert surface as we drove back to Kuwait the same evening. It was like driving through snow.

I can only think that the storm originated in the red earth country around Aleppo, some 900 miles away, or possibly it came from round about Petra. I am inclined to favour the first theory, for the wind blew steady from north-west throughout.

B
•905 The year in which this remarkable sandstorm occurred is to-day known among the Badawin as *sanat al hamra*, i.e. the red year. The birth of children and other events are dated by it—thus fixing the Red Year for all time in the annals of North-East Arabia.

1 [1932 cf pages 259-262 -- Analyst]